

Raffaele Serafini

HOW TO RAISE POLYGLOT CHILDREN WITH NO EFFORT

A short explanation on how to teach your
kids several languages with no effort

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kids several languages with no effort*

*I think that a person who knows only one
language is blind and the world around her
will have one colour.*

*A person who knows two languages can see
the world black and white.*

*A person who knows three languages begins to
see the colours of the world.*

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PREFACE

Why Mikhail Tal, Robert Fisher and Raul Capablanca became such succesfull chessmasters? Why Antonio Gato and Enrico Rastelli were such good jugglers? Why Nadia Comaneci was so good in the Olympic Games? Why Leonhard Euler and Blaise Pascal, were great mathematicians? Why Amadeus Mozart was so good? If we analyze the lives of thousands of artists and scientists, we discover that they were not more gifted than any other person, but someone had trained them since their early years to things that are prejudicially considered and believed to be "adult's business". Never forget that children have much more efficient brains than those of adults, so most of the educational efforts should not be made at the universities, but in kindergartens and elementary schools.

OVERVIEW

The script consists of a brief description of 12 years experiment and its premises.

It later moves to the problems, actually to the only problem encountered during this process and which actually had to do with the prejudice and ignorance of italian national educators.

A part deals with suggestions for educators who might get from this experience the temptation to do the same with their kids. Many improvements are possible and we strongly advice them.

In the last part, there is a list of potential questions, which reflects most of the prejudicial concerns of educators when they face the idea of polyglotism in kids.

INTRODUCTION

We come now to the experiment that each of you can try with incredible results according to the present culture, but normal, considering the natural ability of children. The experiment began in February 2000 and is still in progress today. The preparation's work and planning, began in 1988 in the universities of Venice (Ca'Foscari), Bellaterra (Uab) and in several parts of the world, through the observation and study of the effects of early inputs, their processing and final results in several fields of knowledge.

This is an experiment which began in 2000 in a small village in Venetia, where a couple of linguists decided to test the "method Serafini" (from its inventor) to teach children multiple languages, and all without efforts. The tutor has no necessity to know the languages the kids learn. This method and its results can be achieved without any particular unaccessable mean and wealth, therefore this paper is an invitation to all educators and parents on the planet to do the same. What we describe here can be done at zero costs.

Best wishes

Raffaele Serafini

PREMISES

-To achieve the goal, we suggest to remove the television from home. TV is not controllable, and it's like having a stranger interfering in the home environment. Children quickly learn to operate with the remote tv control, and if not removed from home, it will ruin all your efforts in education. It is not a drastic choice to eliminate the tv, but a choice that makes you responsible to decide, to select and give the inputs that you want. For input, we mean all the external stimulus to which the child is exposed, even during pregnancy. A child begins from the womb to "metabolize all inputs that are processed into patterns that are common to all human beings.

-It is necessary that the inputs are consistent and never contradictory. Contradictions shortcircuit the deep cognitive processes of learning and create confusion. The early learning, if consistent, gives perfect results, compared to the adult learning which will be incomplete and very insecure.

-It is required the cooperation of all members of the family and the educational program must be planned before the birth and continued at least until puberty.

Before you begin, please note that language learning is evaluated mainly under two aspects: the production and the understanding. In plain English: speaking and understanding. Writing and reading are secondary skills and may also be acquired at any moment later. The method developed here is the product of decades of studies by investigators. Once established the feasibility of the method and the results, it can be adopted on a large scale with tens of millions of children.

THE EXPERIMENT

Here it is, in short words and principles, the method. Let's start.

From the first day of her birth to girl "E" (for privacy her name and her sister, will not be disclosed), parents have spoken her respectively VENETIAN (the father) ARMENIAN (the mother), while mother and father among them have spoken standard ITALIAN. After just one year of age, "E", began to communicate with her father in Venetian and in Armenian language with her mother. The evening after supper, every single day, "E" had to see a cartoon or a movie for kids in FRENCH language for about one hour or more. This block of french language cartoons last about 2 weeks alternated by another block of 2 weeks of cartoons or movies in RUSSIAN language. Let's say that nobody of the parents knew French efficiently, and one only knew Russian, and nobody has ever spoke one of the two languages to her. The same program began with the second child "M" born 2 years later, who joined her sister. All cartoons and films were selected from the 1950's productions to this day, with particular care to begin with the old productions since, the most recent productions had the effect of making less attractive the old ones. Therefore we recommend to

avoid, at least up to the age of 7-8 years old, to offer cartoons such as Disney (at least the most recent works). Among other things, the production of Russian animated cartoons, is undoubtedly highly educational for its content and forms of design. The best is to start with the black and white movies and then switch to colored ones. If you expose kids to coloured movies, they will later reject the black and white ones. So, better to start with black and white ones. We wish to emphasize that you do not need to buy these products, you can download them for free in the desired languages from the web.

At 5 years of age the girls entered the local ENGLISH school carried on by English native teachers. Along with this educational policy, every night before going to sleep, fairy tales in Venetian language and Armenian language or sometime English were read. Since the 7th year of age, "E" and "M" had their laptops with the Linux operating system in English and then with all the settings and research work in English (Linux operating systems allows wide customization). The kids naturally adopted the English Wiki and not the Italian version.

Now the girls have respectively 12 and 14 years, understand and speak 6 languages perfectly, and understand many others similar as well. At the age of 11, in the school programmes (3 hours a week) it was introduced also the teaching of German language

which they learnt very proficiently. It would be a seventh language, but in this case no effort or training home with videos has ever been done.

We also strongly recommend to motivate children and tell them they are good and intelligent. Avoid judgements that will mortify kids. Very often we inihibite kids with negative judgements and we risk to ruin the self esteem they need to grow and learn.

PROBLEMS

Only one and relevant. The kindegarten's teachers reproached "E" when she spoke Venetian and threatened the girl with subtle blackmails, thus creating fear to speak the language at home too and creating problems of interference. The problem was solved by removing the kid from the kindegarten, considering that the teachers of the institute, when reproached, insisted in their intolerant behaviour. The kid was moved in favour of a more modern educational facility. It was necessary to explain to the child that all languages are equal in dignity and there is no shame to speak any of them. The girl was encouraged to speak Venetian with incentives. Please note that in years of observations, the investigator noted that stuttering is widespread precisely in areas where there are contrasting languages and in which children are so to say "raped" linguistically in the early years of childhood with absurd prohibitions and intimidation. This is one of the problem associated with nationalism in which teachers are educated.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THIS METHOD

It could be introduced the teaching of a second language in elementary school such as Chinese, Japanese, or Hindi.

The grandparents could speak another language if they know it, and so increase the range of knowledge of the child. Those who can afford, they could hire a maid who speaks another language with the child. However, it is important that the person who talks to the child does it using a single language at the same and all the time. In this way, the child will link: "person + language" and will link them to the internal grammar he builds inside him. The affective human side is very important.

THE USUAL PREJUDICIAL CONCERNS!

-But a child will mess up with all these languages?

No, if the teaching is coherent and conducted as explained above, the final result will be the perfect learning.

-But it is too hard for a young child!

No, the mind of a child is ready to learn dozens of languages simultaneously. Unfortunately, the education and nationalistic monolingualism of the last century, has castrated the possibilities and attitudes of billions of people. Wars and ethnocides against the so-called dialects, have caused a cultural disaster of immeasurable proportions.

-But how does a child learn a language without grammar?

Children build an interior grammar with no need of books. Among other things, their learning is perfect and long lasting, "deep" to use a scientific concept.

-Can I begin later after the second or third year of age?

Better not. Every day after birth, it is too late, because

some contradictory mechanisms may trigger and also because it is a rush against time. The kid's mind can build the interior grammars when he/she is young, later it is too late. It is like moulding clay, after a while it gets hard to manipulate.

-Can the same person switch language so the kid will learn more at the same time?

No, it might create interference and confusion in the kid's mind. "One language one person", and the learning will be perfect and smooth.

Consistency is the cornerstone of this method. The human mind seeks consistency, at least in the initial phase.

-But then my kids could learn the language without going to English schools?

Yes, no doubt, show them cartoons in English every day and after two years you will see incredible results. You can also let them play with English speaking kids for long periods, or have an English speaker babysitting, or a Chinese one in case you want to teach Chinese.

-But television can't be removed, it is too much violence!

No! On the contrary, violence is TV home. It is violence against a frail child who clings to everything

when the parents do not take their responsibilities as educators. Without TV you will have more home life, more intimacy and you will be choosing what to bring into your home at any time. The concept of input is important and thus getting rid of the tv. All that space left, you will fill it with what you choose.

The child is like an assimilator of information waiting to be filled at all times. Give him just the chance to exploit the early and most productive moments of his life. If the child gets used and controlled by TV your education efforts are at serious risk.

THE ADVANTAGES OF POLYGLOTISM

The advantages are many and the list we give is slightly exhaustive. There are no disadvantages unless we consider: ignorance, prejudice and neuronal underdevelopment advantages.

Here a list of advantages:

1)Polyglots develops better brains, more efficient and in life they learn better and more easily other languages.

2)Polyglots can see the world around them from different perspectives.

3)Languages are the main key to understand and study different cultures. Polyglots can better appreciate also the culture of origin, their family and traditions. Freedom and respect are favoured where reciprocal understanding reigns.

4)Efficient communication make you a protagonist in a world in which the sharing of infos is fundamental.

5)Polylingualism permits you to access to many datas in other languages, and escape the typical traditional

nationalistic monolengualism's doctrines of national states. More knowledge will permit the polyglots more choices.